

I HOPE NONE OF YOU CAME HERE EXPECTING ME TO REGALE YOU WITH FASCINATING TALES OF EXOTIC NUMISMATIC ITEMS STRUCK DURING THE CIVIL WAR YEARS. IF SO, I'M AFRAID YOU WILL BE DISAPPOINTED.

AS ADVERTISED, MY PRESENTATION PERTAINS TO RELICS RELATING TO THE CONFEDERATE IRONCLAD WARSHIP MERRIMAC. I HAVE SLIDES OF SOME NUMISMATIC ITEMS, AND ^{ALSO} OF A FEW PIECES THAT UNQUESTIONABLY EXCEED THE LIMITS OF THE TERM "NUMISMATIC." WHETHER NUMISMATIC OR NOT, THEY SHARE ONE COMMON CHARACTERISTIC - ALL WERE MADE OF ~~WOOD OR METAL~~ TAKEN FROM THE MERRIMAC.

MATERIAL

I WILL ASSUME THAT YOU ARE ALL FAMILIAR, AT LEAST TO SOME DEGREE, WITH THE HISTORIC NAVAL BATTLE OF MARCH 9TH, 1862 BETWEEN THE IRONCLAD WARSHIPS MONITOR AND MERRIMAC. ALTHOUGH NEITHER THE NORTH OR THE SOUTH COULD CLAIM A DECISIVE VICTORY, THIS CONTEST HAS EARNED ITS PLACE IN HISTORY BY POINTING OUT THE OBSOLESCENCE OF WOODEN WARSHIPS, AND THUS CHANGING THE COURSE OF NAVAL WARFARE.

AND SO WE WILL ^{BYPASS} ~~SKIP FROM~~ THE BATTLE ITSELF ^{AND SKIP} TO THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING IT. THE MERRIMAC WENT INTO DRY DOCK TO REPAIR DAMAGE, AND REMAINED THERE FOR NEARLY A MONTH. FOLLOWING THIS SHE STEAMED INTO HAMPTON ROADS NEARLY EVERY DAY, BUT NEVER ENGAGED IN BATTLE.

ON MAY 10TH, 1862, NORFOLK WAS CAPTURED BY UNION FORCES. WITH NOWHERE TO GO, THE MERRIMAC'S CAPTAIN ORDERED THE SHIP LIGHTENED. HE HOPED HE COULD THEN STEAM UP THE JAMES RIVER TO RICHMOND.

UNFORTUNATELY, AFTER ^{ACCOMPLISHING THIS,} ~~THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED~~ TWO FEET OF THE MERRIMAC'S WOODEN HULL ^{REMAINS REMAINED} WERE EXPOSED, MAKING HER AN EASY TARGET. AND YET IT WAS CALCULATED THAT SHE STILL COULDN'T MAKE IT UP THE JAMES RIVER. THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT TO DO BUT DESTROY THE SHIP OR BE CAPTURED.

THE MERRIMAC WAS STEAMED TO CRANEY ISLAND, WHERE SHE WAS SET AFIRE IN 30 FEET OF WATER. WHEN THE FLAMES REACHED THE SHIP'S MAGAZINE IT EXPLODED WITH A BLAST WHICH COULD BE HEARD FOR MANY MILES.

ALTHOUGH IT CAN'T BE PROVEN EXACTLY WHEN ALL THE PIECES YOU WILL SEE WERE STRUCK, I FEEL CONFIDENT IN SAYING THAT NONE OF THEM ARE CONTEMPORARY WITH THE WAR. THE FACT THAT THE SHIP REMAINED UNDER THIRTY FEET OF WATER UNTIL WELL AFTER THE WAR ENDED PRETTY WELL ELIMINATES THE POSSIBILITY THAT ANY RELICS ARE ~~CONTEMPORARY WITH THE WAR.~~

WERE PRODUCED DURING THAT PERIOD.

AFTER THE WAR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT MADE SEVERAL UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO RAISE THE MERRIMAC, AND THEN ABANDONED THE EFFORT. STARTING IN 1867, WHEN A WRECKING COMPANY RECOVERED THE IRON RAM, VARIOUS PIECES OF THE VESSEL WERE RAISED BY PRIVATE FIRMS BY USING GUNPOWDER TO BLOW OFF SECTIONS TO OBTAIN COPPER AND IRON.

SLIDE 1

IN 1876 W. P. TILLEY & CO. OF NORFOLK SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING UP SEVERAL OF THE SHIP'S ORIGINAL OAK TIMBERS, WHICH THEY MANUFACTURED INTO WALKING CANES. THESE WERE SOLD WITH A FOUR PAGE BROCHURE GIVING A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SHIP AND BATTLE, AND ATTESTING TO THE FACT THAT THE OAK WAS, IN FACT, RECOVERED FROM THE MERRIMAC. HERE IS A SECTION OF THE CANE, ON WHICH IS AFFIXED A SMALL BRASS PLATE WITH CONFEDERATE RAM MERRMIAC TRADE MARK PAT'D (DATE NOT READABLE) FIRST IRON CLAD WAR SHIP

SLIDE 2

WE NOW MOVE FROM WOODEN CANES TO IRON MEDALETS. IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE TO SHOW SLIDES OF THIS PIECE FIRST, SINCE IT IS BY FAR THE BEST KNOWN MERRIMAC TOKEN. AS YOU CAN SEE, IT IS DATED 1862. FOR YEARS IT WAS CONSIDERED PART OF THE SERIES OF PATRIOTIC CIVIL WAR TOKENS. RECENTLY IT HAS BEEN DEMOTED TO NON-CONTEMPORARY STATUS IN THE CATALOG

SLIDE 3

MOST SPECIMENS ARE HOLED AT THE TOP, AS ISSUED. VERY LIKELY THEY WERE ISSUED WITH A RIBBON THROUGH THE HOLE, TO BE WORN AT SOME EVENT.

COMMENT ON CONDITION.

OBV: THE FIRST IRONCLAD / (MERRIMAC DEPICTED) / 1862
REV: MADE FROM / THE / ARMOUR PLATE / OF / THE MERRIMAC
IRON, 25MM. FULD 498/499

SLIDE 4

HERE'S ANOTHER SPECIMEN, THIS ONE UNHOLED. THIS IS SCARCER THAN THE HOLED VARIETY.

SLIDE 5

THIS PIECE IS MADE OF IRON, AND HAS INCUSE LETTERING. THE REVERSE IS BLANK, BUT I OWN A SPECIMEN WHICH HAS THE SAME INSCRIPTION ON EACH SIDE.

THE 1861 DATE IS CLEARLY AN ERROR. SO, THE OBVIOUS QUESTION IS, WHEN WAS IT MADE? MY SISTER GAVE ME THIS PIECE ABOUT 25 YEARS AGO. IT HAD BELONGED TO HER HUSBAND'S FATHER WHO, AS A YOUNG MAN, HAD WORKED FOR THE OLD DOMINION IRON & NAIL WORKS. ACCORDING TO HIM, IT WAS MADE FOR THE JAMESTOWN EXPO. IN 1907. HE RECALLED SEEING LARGE SHEETS OF IRON PLATE FROM THE MERRIMAC AT OLD DOMINION IRON & NAIL WORKS.

OBV: MERRIMAC / 1861

REV: (BLANK)

IRON, DIAMOND SHAPE, 31X33MM, HOLED AT TOP, INCUSE LETTERING.

SLIDE 6

QUALITY CONTROL WASN'T A HIGH PRIORITY, AS THIS ONE INDICATES.

SLIDE 7

THIS HEART SHAPED MEDAL IS LOOPED AT THE TOP, SO PROBABLY WAS WORN HUNG BY A RIBBON FROM A LAPEL. MY GUESS IS THAT IT WAS ISSUED DURING THE JAMESTOWN EXPO. IT IS QUITE RARE.

SLIDE 8

A RATHER BOLD STATEMENT ON THE REVERSE.

*~~BEING A~~ HAVING BEEN RAISED IN
VIRGINIA, I CAN'T DISAGREE.*

OBV: 1862 / MERRIMAC / 1ST IRON CLAD / OLD / DOMINION

REV: VIRGINIA / THE HEART / OF THE / NATION

IRON, HEART SHAPE, LOOPED AT TOP, 26X28MM, INCUSE LETTERING.

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SLIDE 9

THIS HANGING MEDALET IS IN THE SHAPE OF AN ANCHOR. THE TOP BAR IS IN THE SHAPE OF A CANOE, WITH THE WORDS JAMESTOWN EXPOSITION ACROSS ITS SIDE. ON THE ANCHOR IS MERRIMAC 1862 VIRGINIA.

SLIDE 10

THE BACK OF THE ANCHOR SAYS JAMESTOWN EXPOSITION.

HERE WE HAVE A PIECE WHICH LEAVES NO DOUBT AS TO ITS VINTAGE. AT THE TIME OF THE JAMESTOWN EXPOSITION THERE WERE MANY PEOPLE WHO COULD STILL REMEMBER THE MONITOR-MERRIMAC BATTLE, AND THE REINACTMENT OF THE BATTLE WAS A POPULAR FEATURE OF THE EXPO. THIS MEDALET WAS SOLD AS A SOUVENIR.

A CARD WHICH ACCOMPANIED THE PIECE ^{GIVES} ~~HAS~~ A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BATTLE ON ONE SIDE. THE OTHER SIDE DEPICTS THE SHIPS IN BATTLE AND ATTESTS TO THE FACT THAT THE SOUVENIR, AUTHORIZED FOR SALE BY THE JAMESTOWN EXPOSITION COMPANY, WAS ~~"THE ONLY SOUVENIR MADE FROM GENUINE MERRIMAC IRON."~~ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT APPEARS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CARD:

WE CERTIFY THAT THIS SOUVENIR IS MADE FROM GENUINE "MERRIMAC-VIRGINIA" IRON WHICH WAS HELD IN OUR POSSESSION FOR MANY YEARS, AS A VALUED TREASURE. OLD DOMINION IRON & NAIL WORKS, RICHMOND, VA., U.S.A.

SLIDE 11

THIS HORSESHOE SHAPED MEDALET WAS STRUCK OF IRON FROM THE MERRIMAC. IT WAS PROBABLY MADE FOR SALE AROUND THE TIME OF THE JAMESTOWN EXPOSITION.

SLIDE 12

AS YOU CAN SEE, IT WAS ISSUED BY THE OLD DOMINION IRON AND NAIL WORKS.

OBV: MERRIMAC 1862

REV: OLD DOMINION I. & N.W. CO.

IRON, HORSESHOE SHAPE, 29X35MM. SCHENKMAN ME6.

SLIDE 13

HERE ARE TWO MORE HORSESHOE MEDALETs, IDENTICAL TO THE LAST ONE BUT DECORATED WITH REAL GOLD.

SLIDE 14

AND NOW A FINAL HORSESHOE MEDALET, THIS ONE ISSUED BY THE TREDEGAR COMPANY OF RICHMOND, VA. THE MANUFACTURER'S SIGNATURE CONFIRMS THE FACT THAT THIS PIECE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN STRUCK DURING THE CIVIL WAR. THE WHITEHEAD AND HOAG COMPANY DIDN'T GO INTO BUSINESS UNTIL 1870. *IRON*

SLIDE 15

COMMENT ON THE WORD "CRANBERRY" ON REVERSE -- PROBABLY REFERS TO CRANEY ISLAND, WHERE THE MERRIMAC WAS SUNK

OBV: TREDEGAR CO. MERRIMAC RICHMOND, VA. (THE MAKER'S SIGNATURE, THE WHITEHEAD & HOAG CO NEWARK, N.J. APPEARS IN TINY LETTERS)

REV: CRANBERRY

IRON, HORSESHOE SHAPE, 34X40MM. SCHENKMAN ME7.

SLIDE 16

NOT EVEN THE LOWLY NAIL ESCAPED THE ATTENTION OF SOUVENIR MAKERS. THIS 2½X4½ INCH BROWN ENVELOPE IS IMPRINTED "SOUVENIR. THE ENCLOSED NAILS ARE MADE FROM THE ARMOR PLATE OF THE CONFEDERATE RAM VIRGINIA, COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE MERRIMAC, BY THE OLD DOMINION IRON AND NAIL WORKS CO. RICHMOND, VA." FOUR IRON NAILS WERE IN THE ENVELOPE WHEN I ACQUIRED IT.

SOME OF YOU MAY HAVE SEEN ROBERT HENDERSHOTT'S RECENTLY RELEASED CATALOG OF THE 1904 ST. LOUIS FAIR. HE LISTS A SIMILAR ITEM WHICH SAYS "THE NAILS ATTACHED ATTACHED TO THIS CARD AND THE SMALL BLOCKS HEREWITH WERE CUT FROM THE ARMORPLATE OF THE CONFEDERATE RAM VIRGINIA..." FROM THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE ENVELOPE, THE "BLOCK" APPEARS TO BE A SQUARE IRON MEDAL... IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THIS WAS FROM THE ST. LOUIS EXPO, SINCE THERE WAS NO CONNECTION TO THE BATTLE. MORE LIKELY IT WAS FOR THE JAMESTOWN EXPO.

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SLIDE 17

THIS TABLE MEDAL WAS STRUCK IN 1928 FOR THE 44TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF EDISON ILLUMINATING COMPANIES, WHICH WAS HELD AT OLD POINT COMFORT. IT WAS SCULPTED BY JONATHAN M. SWANSON AND STRUCK BY MEDALLIC ART COMPANY OF NEW YORK CITY. THE REVERSE IS BLANK, EXCEPT FOR THE MANUFACTURER'S SIGNATURE (MEDALLIC ART CO. N.Y. IN TINY LETTERS AT THE BOTTOM)

SLIDE 18

A CARD ACCOMPANYING THE MEDAL STATES "THE ASSOCIATION IS GREATLY INDEBTED TO MR. THOMAS WHEELWRIGHT PRESIDENT, OLD DOMINION IRON AND STEEL WORKS RICHMOND, VIRGINIA FOR HIS GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS OF AUTHENTICATED PORTIONS OF THE IRON PLATING OF THE CONFEDERATE RAM MERRIMAC (LATER NAMED VIRGINIA) WHICH HAS BEEN WROUGHT INTO THIS PAPERWEIGHT."

OBV: ASSOCIATION OF EDISON / ILLUMINATING COMPANIES / 44TH ANNUAL MEETING / OLD POINT COMFORT / OCTOBER 1-5 1928 (THE ASSOCIATION'S SEAL IS IN AN OVAL TO THE LEFT OF THE INSCRIPTION) / (A SCENE WITH FORT MONROE AND THE IRONCLAD MONITOR IN THE BACKGROUND; INSET IN THE CENTER OF THE PLANCHET IS A PIECE OF IRON IN THE SHAPE OF THE MERRIMAC) / IRON FROM PLATING OF IRONCLAD / MERRIMAC 1862

BRONZE WITH IRON INSERT, RECTANGULAR SHAPE, 65X95MM.
SCHENKMAN ME8.

THIS ISN'T THE ONLY SOUVENIR MADE DURING THE 1920S OF MERRIMAC IRON. A 1927 CATALOG OF FRANCIS BANNERMAN & SONS OFFERED A PAPERWEIGHT. I QUOTE FROM THEIR CATALOG: "MADE FROM IRON PLATES FROM THE CONFEDERATE RAM VIRGINIA (MERRIMAC). RELIC OF THE MOST FAMOUS NAVAL BATTLE OF THE CIVIL WAR - THE FIRST ENCOUNTER BETWEEN IRONCLADS. WE RECENTLY SECURED TWO OF THE END PLATES FROM A PARTY IN VIRGINIA, WHOSE FATHER SERVED ON BOARD DURING THE FIGHT. ONE PLATE WE RESERVE FOR OUR MUSEUM, THE OTHER WE WILL CUT UP INTO 1½-INCH DESK WEIGHTS, STAMP ON EACH OF THE FOUR POLISHED SIDES, NAME OF SHIP AND DATE OF BATTLE, THICKNESS OF PLATE 13/4 INCHES, WEIGHT 1 POUND. A RARE SOUVENIR. PRICE, \$3.85." THE ILLUSTRATED PAPERWEIGHT HAS THE FOLLOWING INSCRIPTION ON THE TOP: MADE FROM ARMOR PLATE / CONFEDERATE RAM MERRIMAC (NO DATE OF BATTLE, AS STATED IN THE AD).

J-H. Ford
F.C.S. Boyd

SLIDE 19

FOR MY FINAL SLIDES WE GO BACK IN TIME FROM THE 1920S TO THE 1860S. CONCERNING THIS PIECE, THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT APPEARED IN THE AUGUST, 1868 ISSUE OF THE *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NUMISMATICS*:

IT IS HEADLINED, "BOLEN MEDALET, NUMBER THIRTY-THREE." THE PIECE IS DESCRIBED, AND IT THEN GOES ON TO SAY, AND I QUOTE:

THROUGH OUR FRIEND MR. J. A. BOLEN, OF SPRINGFIELD, MASS., WE HAVE RECEIVED AN IMPRESSION OF THE ABOVE MEDALET AS A DONATION TO THE SOCIETY FROM DR. J. F. PRATT, WHOM, AS THE SOCIETY IS NOW ADJOURNED, WE HEARTILY THANK IN ITS BEHALF. THE DOCTOR HAS FOUR FOR SALE AT TWO DOLLARS EACH. THE MEMORIAL ORIGINATED IN THE FOLLOWING WAY. DR. PRATT HAVING WRITTEN TO MR. BOLEN THAT HE HAD SUCH A PIECE OF COPPER, THE LATTER SUGGESTED THIS USE SHOULD BE MADE OF IT. BEING AUTHORIZED TO DO SO HE STRUCK TEN IMPRESSIONS ONLY, AND THEN DEFACED THE REVERSE DIE, SENDING THE DOCTOR THE DIE AND ALL THE IMPRESSIONS EXCEPT ONE. IT IS AN INTERESTING EXAMPLE OF "HISTORIC MATERIAL."

SLIDE 20

THE REVERSE HAS A BUST OF LINCOLN FACING RIGHT.

OBV: A PIECE OF COPPER / TAKEN FROM / THE / WRECK OF THE /
REBEL RAM MERRIMAC. / IN 1862 / BY / J. F. PRATT / A.A. SURG.
U.S.A. / ONLY TEN STRUCK.

REV: LINCOLN (BUST FACING RIGHT; BOLEN BELOW)
COPPER, 25MM. KING 192; SCHENKMAN ME2.